

Citizens Criticize Y.W.C.A. Policies At Public Meeting

A group of citizens, variously estimated at from 200 to 400 in number, appeared at the YWCA board meeting Monday night and presented a written statement in which a number of policies followed by the local organization were criticized.

FURTHER, THE STATEMENT called for the removal of Betty Davis as secretary of the YWCA, monthly reports, and made a number of other suggestions. Mrs. Don Anderson was spokesman for the group and read the statement.

THE YWCA BOARD went into executive session after the presentation of the statement and after the crowd had left, and Tuesday morning the board, through Mrs. L. V. Chaney, president, issued a statement in answer to the group's statement.

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We come before you, as a group of citizens interested in restoring to our community, a state of rational fellowship and equanimity; and with the purpose of creating an avenue of approach to the problems which confront us. We believe that belligerent attitudes and emotional speeches have no place in this approach. Rather, would we appeal to your reason and ask your cooperation in dispelling the poisonous smog which has enveloped our community.

We feel that the action of the Y.W.C.A. board, taken Jan. 2 in which long established customs of the community were abandoned in favor of a new policy, have contributed toward creating the present state of tension. We sincerely hope that you will reconsider your action in the light of the present state of affairs, and in the best interest of the community.

Since the Y.W.C.A. is an integral part of the community and touches the lives of the majority of our young people, we aver that its policies are a matter of concern to all conscientious citizens. Therefore we would like to offer for your consideration these suggestions:

1. Discontinue the imposition upon this community of the policies of the National Y.W.C.A. as set out in the Blue book, wherever those policies do not coincide with the standards of good citizenship adhered to by the people of Bartlesville. Charge-

es of activities within the National Y.W.C.A., inimical to the fundamental principles of the American republic, have been too well established to be brushed aside without further investigation. If this Y.W.C.A. is to remain an affiliate of the national organization, and to contribute the money collected from the citizens of Bartlesville to the national fund, then it is the prerogative of these citizens to be fully assured that the finger of suspicion can not be pointed at the organization they are helping to finance. The Y.W.C.A. should be what its name implies, a Christian organization for young women, and never a sounding board of -isms, propaganda, or the dissemination of ideologies in the field of economics, labor-relations or sociology.

2. It is apparent that the present executive secretary is in accord with some of these ideologies. Instead of dispelling prejudice, it has been crystallized by these activities. The spirit of fellowship which has long prevailed here has shown marked signs of disintegration under the onslaught of the proponents of the new social order. The pursuit of ideas, theoretically unsalable, but beyond the boundaries of general acceptance, tends to retard rather than accelerate the progress toward the ultimate goal of complete understanding and fellowship among all peoples. We recommend that a new secretary be found, who will more nearly follow, the ideas and lines of endeavor previously established.

3. In this connection, we suggest that the Y.W.C.A. board discontinue all interracial programs in the Y.W.C.A. building. We understand the needs of all races for the fellowship and guidance of Christian organizations, and this we believe can best be provided by separate, parallel programs. Plans for the furtherance of such a program are now in progress and are known to the members of this board.

4. We suggest that the Bartlesville Y.W.C.A. withhold all financial support from the national Y.W.C.A. until that organization can satisfactorily purge its name of all connection with Communists, or with any form of subversive activity.

5. We suggest that the Y.W.C.A. board seek better means of encouraging a membership representative of all of the citizenship of the community.

6. We believe that where a conflict occurs between national policy and the interest and desires of the community at large, it should be the purpose of the Y.W.C.A. board to concur with the wishes of the community they serve. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the residents of a community are most familiar with their own problems and therefore best qualified to cope with them.

7. We suggest that the Y.W.C.A. board make monthly reports to the membership with the double purpose of convincing the members that their desires are being followed, and at the same time learning what those desires are, so that this may be a program truly democratic and flexible to the will of the people.

8. We believe that delegates should at all times be restricted in accordance with the views of their constituents, regardless of national policies.

9. We believe that the board members of the local Y.W.C.A. should be elected by the membership from the double slate of candidates, and that they should be representative of all walks of life in the community.

10. We believe that there should be no screening of candidates as to their agreement or disagreement with national policies, but that they should at all times be in accord with the ideas and standards of the community.

YWCA Gives Answers To Criticism

The purpose of the YWCA both local and national, is to build a world-wide fellowship of women and girls around the ideals of personal and community living to which their Christian faith commits them. The YWCA has been a jealous guardian of this purpose for ninety years. In this country, it is the responsibility of officers and executives to be constantly on the alert for any influence seeking to warp that purpose. The YWCA never has been a front organization for any other group and it is our firm determination that it never will be. The YWCA, and international organization, is dedicated to understanding of Jesus, sharing His love for all people, and growing in the knowledge and love of God.

The constitution of the Young Women's Christian Association of Bartlesville states in Article 1, Section 2. "Purpose. We, the Young Women's Christian Association of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, a member of the Young Women's Christian Ass'n of the United States of America, declare our Purpose to be:

To build a fellowship of women and girls devoted to the task of realizing in our common life those ideals of personal and social living to which we are committed by our faith as Christians.

In this endeavor we seek to understand Jesus, to share in his love for all people, and to grow in the knowledge and love of God."

1. Every YWCA is an autonomous unit and the Board of Directors of the Bartlesville YWCA, taking directive from its membership, selects from the national program those parts which it believes are suited to the community needs.

Any woman or girl, 18 years of age or over, who accepts this purpose by assenting to the following declaration, shall be entitled to electoral membership in the Association. "Together with other members of the Bartlesville Association, I desire to belong to this fellowship and to share in the responsibilities for the realization of the Purpose."

The YWCA is a Christian organization. It is opposed to communism. Its members, lay and professional, are devoting their lives to bringing the Kingdom of God on earth. Christianity and the Kingdom of God have nothing in common with the commu-

nist practice of terrorism, brutality, and the suppression of the rights, freedom and integrity of the individual.

2. The policies and program of the Bartlesville YWCA are determined by the board and its committees chosen from the membership and not by the executive director. We heartily endorse our executive director and are satisfied that she is following the directives of the Board.

3. Action on the suggestion that the YWCA board discontinue all inter-racial program in the YWCA building would require a change in a long-standing policy. In accordance with democratic procedure, the board will refer the question to the membership for decision.

4. The board takes it as a duty to be assured that the national board of the YWCA is free from communism or any other subversive activity.

5. The YWCA has sought and will continue to seek membership representative of the community.

6. The local YWCA board as an autonomous body attempts to choose that portion of the national program and uses whatever resources of the national association it feels are best suited to the needs of the community.

7. The YWCA for the past three years has sent out a monthly letter to its members advising them of its activities, and reports of our program are given at the three membership meetings, fall, winter and spring. Now that we have more adequate facilities we are looking forward to bringing the membership together more often.

8. A delegate to our triennial convention must be an electoral member who goes representing the local organization. Together with the representatives from all other local YWCA's they formulate the policies.

9. We favor a choice on the ballot, have tried in the past to have a choice and will continue to try.

Candidates for the Board of Directors are selected by the nominating committee which is elected by the membership. This committee consists of five members, all of whom shall be electors and two, and only two of whom, shall be members of the Board of Directors.

10. The nominating committee is guided in selecting candidates by their experience in the YWCA, commitment to the purpose and their knowledge of and interest in the community as a whole.